

STATEWIDE INTEROPERABILITY GOVERNING BOARD (SIGB)

MINUTES

May 13, 2014

ATTENDEES: Leo Dutton, MSPOA; Ron Baldwin, SCIO; Joe Briggs, MACO; Tim Burton, Governor's Office; Tom Butler, DOJ; Mike Doto, MT VFA; Rhonda Fenner, OIA Alternate; Geoff Feiss, MTA; Jeff Fisher, DMA; Patrick Lonergan, MFCA; Bonnie Lorang, MITS; Clint Loss, MEMSA; Roger Nasset, MCOP, Jon Swartz, MDOT

CONFERENCE CALL: Kevin Myhre, MLCT

GUESTS: Quinn Ness, SWIC; Trent Bower, Mineral County; Keith Cook, Motorola Solutions; Chad Hultin, PSCB; Dale Osborne, MHP; Jennifer Reese, Motorola Solutions; Ed Shindoll, Broadwater Co; Shantil Siperas, MACO Alternate; Wing Spooner, PSCB; Dan Sullivan, PSCB

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm by Leo Dutton, SIGB Chair.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Geoff Feiss moved to approve the April minutes and Mike Doto seconded. The motion passed.

STATUS REPORTS:

FirstNet Initial Consultation Package: Dan Sullivan provided an update on a packet of information that was received from FirstNet. He distributed copies of a summary page about the packet as well as the complete packet of information. Dan explained that FirstNet's Director of State Consultation, David Buchanan, has requested the following information prior to the initial State Consultation meeting:

- **Readiness Checklist (Appendix 1):** Includes questions about the state's governance body; attendees at the initial consultation meeting; scheduling; state and local wireless contract vehicles; outreach plan and barriers. This information is mandatory.
- **Requested Discussion Topics (Appendix 2):** During the initial meeting, FirstNet would like to be updated on relevant activities and issues and provided a recommended list of topics to cover.

Dan explained that FirstNet wants information on how the first consultation meeting should be organized and what discussion topics should be covered, including, the governance process, the tribal nation points of contacts and those for larger cities, who are the potential users, what coverage areas public safety stakeholders are interested in, who are the public safety stakeholders, when meetings should be scheduled, major state events, and state specific information. The packet also contained:

- **Relevant Provisions of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (Act) (Appendix 5):** Lists relevant provisions of the Act to explain what Congress has directed FirstNet to do.

- **Readiness Checklist Instructions (Appendix 4):** Contains information about where to send the checklist and how to follow file naming conventions.
- **Initial Consultation Meeting Agenda (Appendix 3):** A proposed agenda for the initial consultation meeting.

Dan asked the group to review all of the topics suggested in Appendix 2. Dan will draft a reply, post it to the SIGB website by May 23 and send SIGB members email notification to review the comments. He encouraged members to send comments about Appendices 1 and 2. The plan is to send the checklist and discussion topics to FirstNet by May 30, after which the initial consultation can be scheduled with FirstNet staff. Dan proposed SIGB attendance at the Initial Consultation meeting and suggested potential meeting dates of July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14 or November 18, which coincide with scheduled SIGB meeting dates.

Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP): Quinn Ness reported on comments received on the SCIP thus far, including the need for more global LMR initiatives. Geoff Feiss said the outline seemed to be fairly consistent with items discussed at the September meeting. However, the SCIP is mostly LMR focused, with FirstNet initiatives mixed in, making it a bit confusing. He asked if there is an easy way to distinguish between the two initiatives. Quinn said that it has been a bit of a challenge putting the SCIP together, because they are trying to respond to federal government requirements; primarily requirements of the U.S. Department of Homeland, Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) and using OEC's SCIP template while at the same time including FirstNet and SLIGP grant requirements as well as the directives in the Governor's Executive Order in the SCIP. Trying to put all of the initiatives under the SAFECOM Communications Continuum categories may also have led to some confusion, but this is consistent with OEC's template.

Geoff Feiss expressed his view that the approach used in the SCIP may not be productive, indicating that FirstNet should concentrate on the LMR system that currently exists. Bonnie pointed out that page 6 says the purpose of the SCIP to have stakeholders develop a viable plan for a statewide trunked LMR. Since the SIGB is going to vote and adopt the SCIP, it should be looked through on a section-by-section basis. Discussion took place about broadening the SCIP purpose to include all LMR systems and not just trunked LMR systems; however, it may not be appropriate to include systems over which the SIGB has no privy or authority.

The need to document how many agencies are currently using the statewide trunked LMR system was discussed and it was noted that some agencies have trunking equipment, but are not using it. LMR technologies and specifically the trunked LMR system is poorly understood which creates issues with decision makers such as county commissioners and legislators. More reference material is needed, including information on life-cycle planning. Dale Osborne, MHP, was asked to generate a report on the usage of the statewide trunked LMR system. Specifically who is using the system, where it is being used (geographically) and how it is being used (daily operations, tactical during large incidences, transporting prisoners, etc.) so that the usage of the system could be more transparent and better understood. This report and a briefing on what is the system and who owns, operates and maintains specific system assets will be provided by Dale at the next SIGB meeting. Discussion took place about the history of the statewide LMR system. The overall purpose of the SIGB is to plan, develop and promote public safety interoperable

communications in Montana. Interoperable communications include land mobile radio and broadband technologies.

Several tables in the SCIP include completion dates that are coming up soon. At the next meeting, the progress toward meeting those goals should be discussed.

A discussion regarding the presentation of information to association members and receiving their concurrence and the purpose of the SIGB members being empowered by their respective association to act on their behalf ensued. It was noted that expanding the size of the SIGB would have a negative impact on its effectiveness.

SIGB Working Groups: A suggestion was made to post working group names, chairs and members on the SIGB website. More working groups may need to be created in the future. Working group membership should include subject-matter experts. Discussion occurred about the process of acting on working group recommendations. Decision making needs to be efficient. The suggested process was:

- The SIGB develops a working group and assigns the working group with a task;
- The working group chair briefs the SIGB and presents the results of the task and any recommendations at an official SIGB meeting;
- The SIGB discusses the results of the assigned task and recommendations and introduces suggestions, changes, etc. if needed.
- SIGB formally adopts a motion implementing the results of the task and/or recommendation.

Discussion of the SCIP will continue at the next meeting. Members were asked to send suggestions and comments to Quinn, which he will compile and bring back to the SIGB.

LEGISLATIVE PLANNING:

Colonel Tom Butler, MHP reiterated the need to fund the statewide trunked LMR system equitably so that MHP and Lewis and Clark County do not end up bearing an unfair burden. He made the following points:

- System operations and maintenance expenses will need to be a priority over build-out.
- The statewide trunked LMR system represents a \$65 million asset, but no single agency is maintaining the equipment (i.e. no one is checking the oil in generators or looking to see if ice has damaged a microwave antenna, etc.)
- The system has significant ownership issues, with some sites having separate owners for land, tower/shelter, trunking equipment, and microwave equipment. In many cases, local governments do not have the money to pay for the operations and maintenance of their system or system assets. Coordination with all the system owners is a significant challenge.
- A “band director” is needed to help with future buildout plans, (i.e. someone who can decide if a tower should be built here or if space from an existing provider should be rented over there.)

- “Stranded” money in the 9-1-1 Wireless Recovery Account is being investigated as a possible source of funding for the statewide trunked LMR system. Tom stressed that this idea does not affect in any way 9-1-1 funding that goes to local jurisdictions. Obtaining revenue from raising fees or taxes will not be looked upon favorably. It is better to utilize revenue sources that are already in place. Tom will be exploring the idea at a meeting with MITS. Everyone will need to come to the table and support the idea for it to be successful.

Bonnie Lorang gave a brief overview of HB 575, which was passed by the legislature in the last session. She explained how telecommunications providers with unpaid E911 mobile wireless equipment purchases were reimbursed from the stranded funds, with the balance sent back to local jurisdictions. She clarified that customers are already paying a dollar a month on their bills, so they shouldn’t bear the full burden of funding a public safety communications system.

Tom Butler stressed that public-private partnerships are needed to make things work. Additional analysis and involvement with telecommunications providers is needed to see if the idea can work.

Geoff Feiss posed these questions:

- What is it that the money would be used for?
- What alternative revenue sources are there, i.e. what fees would locals be paying?
- How much money is needed for operations?
- How much money is needed to complete the system?

Tim Burton indicated that if a system is going to be managed effectively, three items are needed: 1) an asset inventory to know what you own and where, 2) a viable capital plan, and 3) a plan to pay for it.

Joe Briggs mentioned additional issues, such as the cost of day-to-day operations (i.e. higher electricity costs with trunking equipment), ownership questions, warranty issues and frequencies. There is a concern that if someone were to shut equipment off, it could have far-reaching consequences. Commissioners need to be engaged and educated.

Tim Burton provided some history, indicating that U.S Department of Homeland Security grants for communications sites and equipment were a response to the events of September 11. The grants were not set up to fund ongoing operations and maintenance. The grants were directed to local governments, who were the owners and were to be in charge. When the Interoperability Montana association failed, Governor Schweitzer appointed the SIGB to continue progress on building a system of systems and to address long-term needs. These efforts aren’t easy. But, taking advantage of FirstNet when it comes to fruition and coordinating private-partnerships will be important.

Sheriff Dutton indicated that legislators frequently ask when the radio system will be done. However, the system will never be “done” because it will always need to be maintained, just like a car. The Sheriff said he is not in favor of each county putting in money, mainly because Lewis

and Clark County already contributes about \$375,000 a year. Geoff said that funding models can include the concept of fees and matching funds.

Colonel Butler said that everyone who travels through Montana or who lives here benefits from the system. Does it work perfectly? No, but it is better than what we had. There will need to be a mutual understanding of issues, because some counties do not want to manage their sites or equipment. A large number of MOUs and agreements will be needed to manage and operate the system.

ADJOURNMENT: At 3:05 pm, Mike Doto moved to adjourn. Tom Butler seconded, and the motion carried. The next meeting was changed to Tuesday, June 17. Sheriff Dutton stated that has a conflict on that day, so Ron Baldwin will chair the meeting. Carrie will send out a new meeting notice.